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23 January 1975

MEMORANDUM

Identification of Warsaw Pact
Nuclear Delivery Aircraft

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Conclusions

1. The size of the nuclear strike elements of Warsaw Pact Frontal Aviation evidently is more dependent on pilot training and qualifications than aircraft characteristics. Although there are about 700 Soviet aircraft in the NATO Guidelines Area (NGA) assigned to units that have a nuclear role, recent intelligence information and analysis indicates that only some 300 of the pilots in these units are--according to Soviet standards--qualified to fly nuclear strikes. As such, the Pact apparently does not have a group of specially dedicated or configured aircraft in the NGA that is directly comparable to NATO's nuclear dedicated air forces. This seriously complicates the problem of identifying and enumerating Pact nuclear air elements if they are to be considered for arms control purposes.

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This memorandum was prepared in the Office of Strategic Research of CIA and informally reviewed by analysts in the Defense Intelligence [redacted] who concur in its conclusions. Comments and queries may be addressed to [redacted]

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NSA review completed

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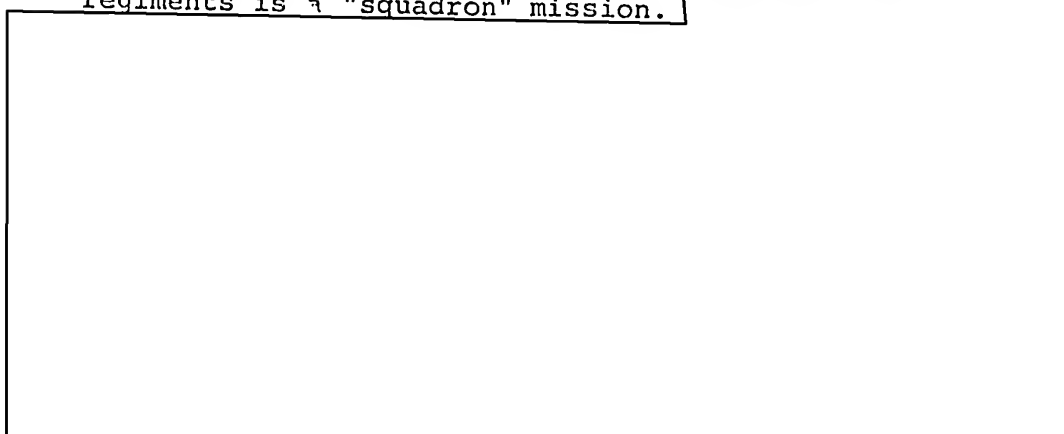


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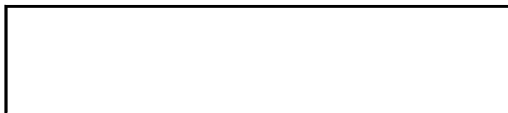
5. Recent Pact defectors have also testified that nuclear delivery within Soviet tactical air regiments is a "squadron" mission.

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Implications

6. Most Warsaw Pact combat aircraft in the NATO Guidelines Area are probably technically capable of delivering nuclear weapons (see figure 1).^{*} However, only some 700 of these aircraft are assigned to units

[REDACTED] The significance of the new analysis is that according to Soviet standards only a portion of the pilots in these units--perhaps 300 in all--are qualified to fly nuclear strike missions.

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7. This conclusion has important arms-control implications. It indicates that the Warsaw Pact probably does not have a group of specially dedicated and configured aircraft for nuclear delivery that compares to NATO's nuclear dedicated air forces. NATO assigns particular aircraft nuclear missions and fits them with unique nuclear weapons control devices. In contrast, the Warsaw Pact apparently assigns nuclear missions to particular pilots in its tactical air units rather than aircraft.

8. Accordingly, the task of isolating those elements of Pact tactical aviation earmarked for the nuclear delivery mission to serve as the basis for reductions or ceilings on tactical nuclear weapons is seriously complicated.

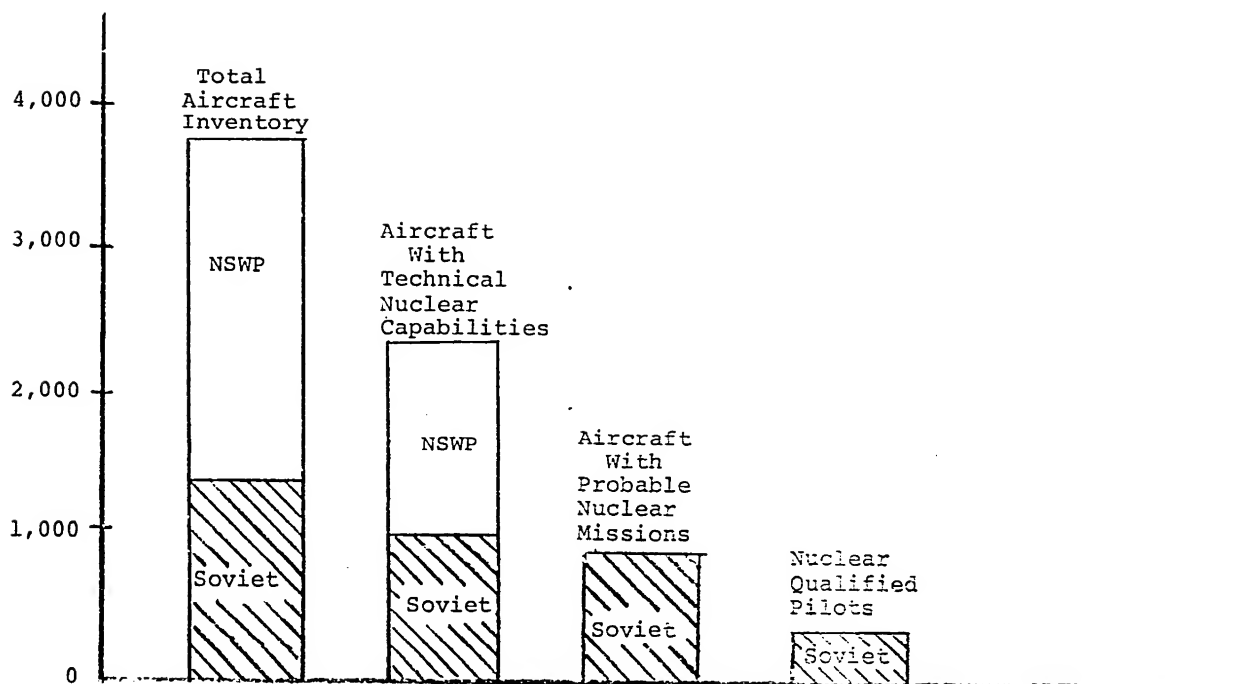
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Figure 1

Pact Nuclear Delivery Air Forces
in the NATO Guidelines Area



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